

Autumn 2022

VASEY RSL CARE NEWS

The Quarterly Newsletter of Vasey RSL Care

Ground-breaking at New Ivanhoe ESA

The construction has begun for Samma Place, which will be home to our new Ivanhoe Ex-Service Apartments.

Just before Christmas, the ground-breaking ceremony took place with Samma Group and Vasey RSL Care Property Services staff taking part.

Samma Place includes commercial offices, retail space, and nearly 500 apartments, with underground parking and amenities including roof top gardens and internal courtyards. All apartments have either a private terrace or balcony.

The project is aiming for completion in the first half of 2023, when our 17-unit Vasey RSL Care Ivanhoe Ex-Service Accommodation site will be exchanged for 27 one-bedroom apartments in the new construction.

"We are very pleased to partner with the Samma Group, which has a strong ethic of supporting



people in need in Australia and overseas," says Janna Voloshin, Vasey RSL Care CEO. "This is a very exciting step towards achieving our 2021-2025 strategic objectives."



From left: Samma Group, Simon Abdelmalak (left) and Josh Abdelmalak (second from left); Ashley Triegaardt, Vasey RSL Care Contracts & Projects Coordinator and Steve Best, Vasey RSL Care General Manager Property Services; and right, Benjamin Cribb from Samma Group.

From Our CEO

Saluting Excellence

Just before Christmas, we finally held our staff Saluting Excellence Conference and Awards. I feel that all our staff deserve recognition for everything they have done for our community over these past two years – even more so than usual – but that said, there are always people who stand out for the way they step up when it's needed, show leadership to others, or handle difficult situations with maturity and kindness.

We were so pleased to be able to acknowledge our winners in front of their peers this year and to once again welcome our VIP guests, and to receive sponsorship from our valued partners at a lovely occasion. Congratulations to all our nominees and winners – you do us proud. (See page 4 for details.)

COVID-19 & the 'Vasey Reserves Bench'

It has been a hectic start to the year with Omicron affecting our organisation, as it has the entire aged care sector, with staff shortages across the country.

Our staff have done a wonderful job and our community has been well cared for throughout.

Shortly after Christmas, with such high daily numbers, we put a call out to our networks for people to help us out, if and when we might need it.

We were truly thankful for the generous response to that call with around 40 people going onto the 'Vasey Reserves Bench' and giving us their time when we needed them most.

And we did need them! My sincere thanks to all these people for helping us get through a very difficult Omicron wave.

Welcoming Carry On to Our Office

From the beginning of March, we will be welcoming the staff of Carry On to make our offices in Hawthorn their new home.

Carry On is an ex-service organisation which has supported veterans for more than 85 years with services such as education grants, financial support and accommodation. Our two organisations have much in common, sharing a similar mission and goals. We have similar accommodation services but



in complementary locations: sharing office space will enable us to work more closely together to benefit the veteran community. Welcome!

Moving Ahead with Our New Strategic Plan

As you may have read on the cover, the building of Samma Place and our new Ivanhoe Ex-Service Accommodation apartments has begun! This is a major construction project with businesses, retailers and over 500 apartments. All being well, the exchange will take place in the first half of 2023.

Further to our Veteran Accommodation Research Project last year, a summary of the outcomes is now available on our website and a detailed V Centre Proposal is about to be released.

We are grateful to all who offered their views and expertise through the survey, focus groups and interviews. My thanks also go to those organisations, groups and ESOs who helped distribute the survey so widely across Victoria. The number of responses gives us a good level of confidence in the information gained and this will help us make informed decisions for the future.

We are currently arranging dates for briefings on our Strategic Plan which will take place over Zoom. Please look out for these if you would like to find out more.

New Wodonga Ex-Service Accommodation

Our three units at Wodonga are now ready for their first occupants and we have one person moving in soon - an indication of the need for this service in regional centres, and support for our new strategy.

**Janna Voloshin,
Chief Executive Officer**





Roses & Champagne for Valentine's Day

Love was in the air at Vasey RSL Care Bundoora with couples enjoying a romantic afternoon tea together. Congratulations to all these couples for many decades of love.

Right: Denise and Ray.

Below from left: Graham and Judith, Brian and Val, Norm and Merle.



What is the Role of the Commission?

The Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission is the national regulator of aged care services. The Commission is focused on delivering a world class sector that safeguards the welfare and rights of consumers. It protects the safety, health, wellbeing and quality of life of people receiving government-funded aged care. How does the Commission achieve this?

The Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission is responsible for the accreditation process that assesses and monitors all aged care services that receive government funding.

Accreditation is a fundamentally important function that ensures aged care services are provided in accordance with the Aged Care Quality Standards. The current standards were introduced in July 2019 and are based on the principle of 'person-centred care' where the individual needing support has choice and control over the care and support they receive.

As Vasey RSL Care receives government funding both for residential and home care (dependent on the needs of residents or clients), all our aged care homes and our Home Care service must undergo regular assessments to retain accreditation.

Prior to July 2019, visits by assessors were either unannounced or planned. Since that date, all visits are now unannounced to ensure the assessors get a genuine picture of the daily operations of the service.



Residential Aged Care is assessed against all eight standards while Home Care is assessed against seven, with Standard 5: service environment not applicable.

Results of accreditation are publicly available online at: [agedcarequality.gov.au/reports](https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/reports)

The Commission also administers the Serious Incidents Response Scheme (SIRS) and works to reduce the use of restrictive practices.

Read more:

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/about-us>

Saluting Excellence Conference & Awards 2021

In December, our Saluting Excellence Staff Conference and Awards Presentation went ahead, thanks once again to the generosity of our sponsors and a short window between COVID-19 waves.

Many of our staff spend much of their lives in uniform, so the annual conference is not just a day to recognise those who have been acknowledged with an award, but also a day to dress up and enjoy each other's company.



Photos 'on the red carpet' (left) are a good way to begin the day.



The theme for this year's conference was 'Our Legacy' and MC, Jodi Evans, Senior Human Resources Advisor, introduced Chair of the Board, Mike O'Meara OAM to open the event.



Mike noted our long-standing connection to the War Widows' Guild (VIC), our connection to the Vasey family, and the important legacy we have.

From top: staff from Frankston South, Brighton and Bundoora smile for the cameras on arrival. Below left: Jodi Evans, MC Below right: Mike O'Meara OAM, Board Chair

CEO, Janna Voloshin spoke of the legacy we each receive from our own families, quoting Buddha, "The value of life is not based on how long we live, but how much we contribute to others in our society".

"Mrs Vasey contributed." Janna pointed out how Mrs Vasey had built the Guild and Vasey

Housing from her own determination to make lives better for others, and Vasey RSL Care is still here with the same goals.



In honour of the work of the Guild as it moves to bring its operation to a close, Mike and Janna presented



a book to the WWG committee members - a pictorial tribute to the WWG VIC and its founder, Mrs Vasey.

Keynote speaker, Dr Susan Aberti AC provided an eye-opening overview of the trials she has faced in life. She was taught to stand up for what she believes in, and this has been a guiding principle throughout her life.

Susan lost her husband in a road accident and her only child to diabetes, and since then, this has been one of the many causes she has supported: like Mrs Vasey, she overcame difficulties, never giving up.





The 2021 Saluting Excellence Awards included the new Jessie Mary Vasey Award for Excellence in Traditional Values, honouring the continuation of Mrs Vasey's goals. Presented by WWG VIC Chair, Wendy Charlton, **Linda D'Sylva** (Bundoora) and **Ruwan Bogodaarachchige** (Frankston South) were recognised with this award (above left).



Awards for Excellence in Dignity went to **Alanna Singleton** (Home Care), **Nicole Groves** (Bundoora) and **Emil Vanderzee** (Veteran Services), all pictured from left, and **Doung Veng** (Frankston South).



Excellence in Fulfillment Awards were presented to **Mishelle Ansems** (Home Care), **Vicki Jarrett** (Brighton) and **Melody Nkomo** (Frankston South), all shown left, and to **Julie Swanson** (Home Care).



There were 138 nominations for the Excellence in Care Awards! **Chamini Dinethra Chandradasa** (Frankston South), **Bindu Simon** (Brighton) and **Elsa Bramwell** (Home Care) received awards, left, as well as **Carolyn Boland**, **Rachel Baines** and **Neville Lin**, all from Brighton East.



Awards for Excellence in Quality went to **Santosh Poudel** (Quality Coordinator) and **Lisa Woodall** (Finance), shown left.



Below left are **Rayphe Collins** (HR) and **Melissa Hunt** (Frankston South) who were awarded for Excellence in Security.



Shown bottom left are the winners of Excellence in Camaraderie Awards: **Jodi Evans** (HR), **Nikunj Patel**, **Harshdeep Kaur** and **Sanja Essa** (all Aged Care Services), **Kathleen Esdaile** (Property Services) and **Bridget Warren** (Frankston South).

The recipient of the CEO Award is chosen from all the award winners.



Congratulations to **Nicole Groves**, Residential Manager at Vasey RSL Care Bundoora on the 2021 CEO Award.

"We received 232 nominations for the 2021 Saluting Excellence Awards and I would like to congratulate every one of these staff," said Janna. "This was a second very difficult COVID year and it is not easy to choose who should receive the awards when there are so many deserving staff: nominees and winners should all be very proud."

The conference and awards would not happen without the generous support of our sponsors and it was great to be able to see many of them at the conference: thank you for the wonderful support you give us not just for this event but as valued suppliers and partners throughout the year.



Clockwise from top left: Midnight Express, Advantage Salary Packaging, Medirest, Dominant, and EBOS and Essity (Tena).

Have You had Your Booster?

Aged care residents were some of the first people to receive their first and second COVID-19 vaccinations, and therefore were in the earliest groups to have their booster. Now it is mandatory for aged care staff to also receive their booster/third dose.

In November, our first booster vaccination clinic for residents and staff took place at Vasey RSL Care Frankston South, followed over the next couple of weeks by our other three aged care homes. In each case, almost all residents were able to have their vaccinations and eligible staff also had theirs, that is, staff whose first vaccination was six months earlier.

Over these first few weeks of 2022, the Omicron wave has again take the lives of many Victorians, and while vaccination is not a 100% guarantee of protection, there is no doubt that it reduces the severity of the virus for those who do catch it.

This is seen in the proportions of those in intensive care: according to the ABC news website, the chances of being in ICU in NSW if you are double vaccinated are 1 in 1000. If you are not vaccinated, your chances are 1500% higher at 1 in 67.

According to the Victorian Chief Health Officer, unvaccinated people make up less than 6% of the population, but make up 35.8% of those in ICU.

Sadly, some people are more at risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19, even when they are fully vaccinated: those who have received a transplant and are on medication to suppress rejection and those with certain types of cancer. Some of these people are still at high risk and can become very unwell.

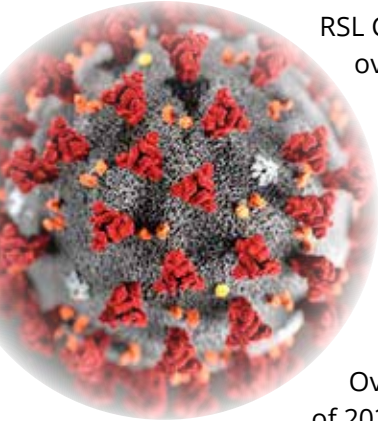
The other group at high risk is older people: the effectiveness of our immune systems reduces as we age, and even if fully vaccinated, older people are still more vulnerable.

This is why it is vital that all who can have our vaccinations, as we become eligible, do so.

At the time of writing, more than half of Victorians have received their booster and this number is increasing daily.

In the aged care sector, all staff who work at or visit aged care homes must have either already had their booster, or have an appointment booked by 12 March. At the time of writing, 91% of our staff have had their booster and the remaining staff (who became eligible later) are booked to get theirs by the required date.

The vast majority of Australians are on board to help keep us all safe and help protect the most vulnerable.



Join Our Team!

Vasey RSL Care employs people in a wide range of roles in caring and support, management and administrative positions, in our Property Services, Veteran Services, Home Care, Finance and Admin teams and at our residential aged care homes in Brighton, Brighton East, Bundoora and Frankston South.

Our organisation is mission-based and not-for-profit: if you are interested in finding out more about working here or volunteering, please visit our website for more information: www.vaseyrslcare.org.au

Click on the 'Join Our Team' link.





Bee Keeping Offers Many Benefits

Simon McEvedy, a resident at Vasey RSL Care’s Ivanhoe Ex-Service Accommodation, attended the Introduction to Urban Bee Keeping nearly a year ago. Organised by Box Hill RSL through RSL Active, the course promoted bee-keeping to veterans. Ben from Ben’s Bees in Blackburn presented the session.

Simon (pictured below) tells us:

I am an Army Veteran – I served in Rwanda – and I became a Vasey resident in 2020 after returning to Australia from the UK in 2019.

Since coming back, I have become a member of the Hawthorn RSL where I attend events, volunteer and am known as the Grounds Keeper (appointed by Lucas Moon) and I look after the lawns.

In early 2021, I attended the ‘Introduction to Urban Bee-keeping’ put on by RSL Active and hosted by Box Hill RSL where I had the pleasure of meeting Chris Gray from Vasey RSL Care.

The course was presented by Ben’s Bees (*Instagram @bensbees*) and his charismatic personality and love of bees got me hooked.

After the course, I read books, watched YouTube videos and volunteered with Ben to work towards becoming an Apiarist, or what beginners are known as – ‘NEWBEE’S’.

Ben has been a mentor to me, generously sharing his wisdom and his passion for bees, which is contagious!

In August last year I purchased my first two hives which are in my backyard in Ivanhoe. I also researched and planted a bee-friendly garden: I have been learning constantly about these amazing creatures and they never cease to amaze me. They have provided me with

a positive hobby that keeps me engaged and gives me purpose – and they remind me when they want me to keep away when they ‘bump me’ and chase me to the back door. They certainly helped during the long Melbourne Covid lockdown.

I started an Instagram account *veteran_bee_therapy*

to share my experiences with other veterans who might find the joy and pleasure of keeping bees.

When I’m doing a hive inspection, it keeps me focused and in the moment and that’s why I use the hashtag *#keepyourheadinyourhive*.

Apart from the bees I have had the opportunity to connect with other veterans, veteran organisations and veteran-friendly businesses that are also doing amazing things in the veteran space.

I’ve asked a number of these groups to join us for an event: Introduction to Veteran Bee-keeping Information Day at the Vasey RSL Care V Centre in April. Representatives from Young Veterans, Ben’s Bees, Aussie Veteran Coffee Co, Ministry of Chocolate, ANVAM, Veterans in Construction, Hawthorn RSL,



Simon has also learnt about bee-friendly gardening.

Open Arms and Vasey RSL Care are all planning to come.

The event will showcase bees and the therapeutic benefits they can have on veterans’ wellbeing and mental health, and also connect other groups that will collectively help and support this idea to move forward, and ultimately engage and connect veterans with bees.

Bee Connected and Bee Involved.



Thank You to Our Major Conference Sponsors

Will You Support Our Heroes?

'Hero's Wish' honours veterans and war widows by fulfilling their dreams and adding to their treasured memories.

To make a donation to Hero's Wish, please complete the form below and send it to:
Ms Janna Voloshin, CEO, Vasey RSL Care, PO Box 203, Hawthorn VIC 3122



I would like to donate \$ _____ to support Hero's Wish.

My cheque, payable to Vasey RSL Care, is enclosed

Please debit my credit card: number* | | | | | ■ | | | | | ■ | | | | | ■ | | | | |

Mastercard VISA Name on card:* _____

Signature:* _____ Expiry:* ____/____ CVV* _____ (3 digits)

Address: ** _____

Phone: _____ Email: ** _____

Alternatively, donate online: www.vaseyrslcare.org.au/heros-wish/grant-a-heros-wish/

* Please provide these details so we can process your donation. ** Provide address &/or email if you would like a receipt sent.

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